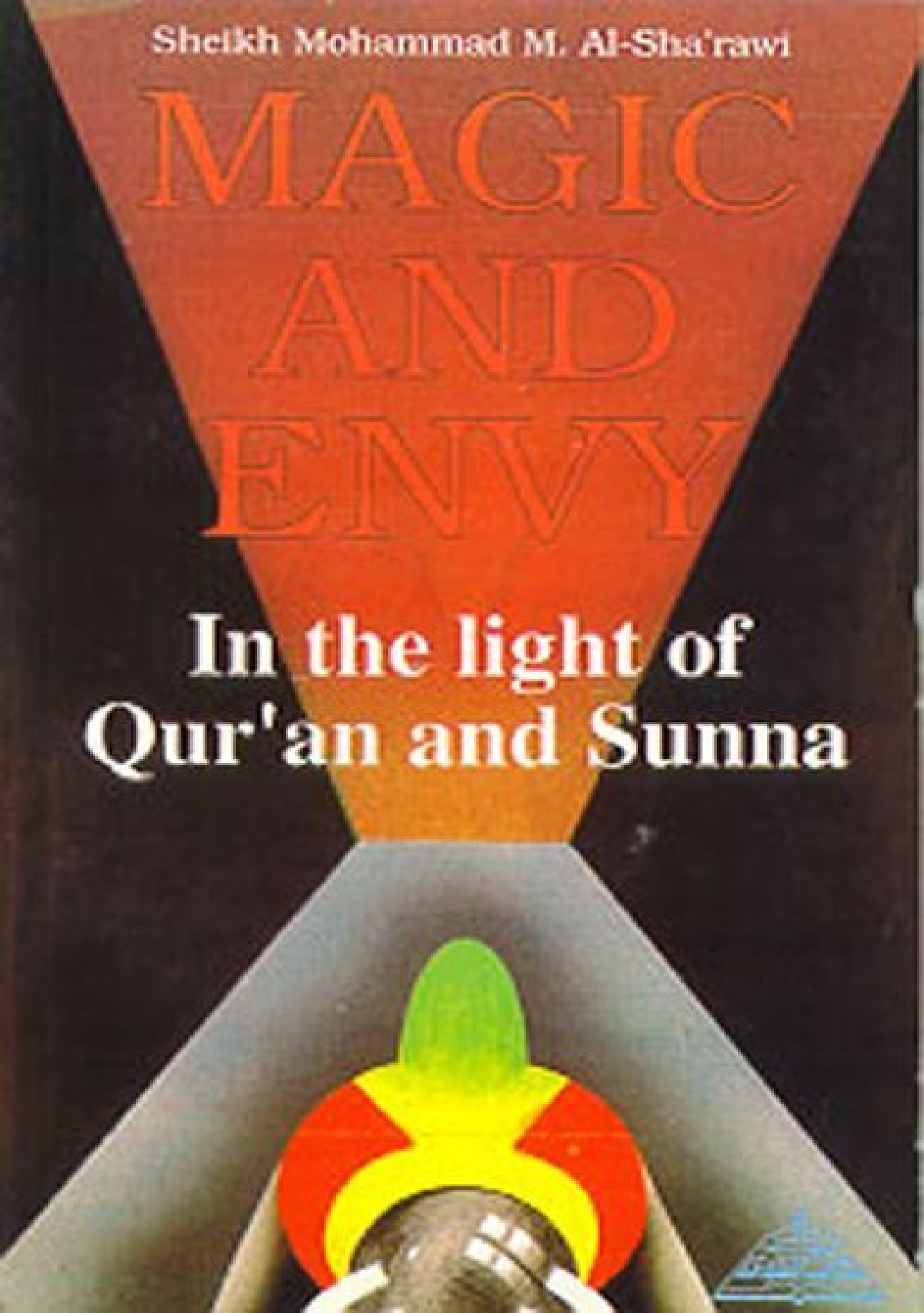
Sheikh Mohammad M. Al-Sha'rawi

MAGIC AND ENVY

In the light of Qur'an and Sunna



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Shaykh Muhammad M. al-Sha'rawi
Dar Al-Taqwa

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Chapter One Hidden Powers in Existence

Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - created the universe and established laws to govern it. Everything in existence is subject to laws. Man has laws appropriate to his life in this world. All that serves man is also subject to laws so that these things give man the things he needs in life.

In this existence Allah has created things which act on your behalf and other things which you have to do yourself. The things which act on your behalf are those which are given to you costfree, like the sun, the moon, the stars, the wind, and the rain. All these things are given to you without any payment being asked of you. As for the things which you have to do yourself, they are the secondary causes of Allah in the earth. If you do them, you will get something. If you do not do them, you will not get anything.

For instance, if you cultivate the earth well and plant good seeds in it, it will give you an abundant crop. If you do not cultivate it and leave it unplanted, it will not give you anything. If you search for the minerals inside the mountains and dig mines to extract them, they will give up their treasures. If you do not act, they

do not give you anything. It is like that with all the means of life. You must activate them in order for them to give you something. You must make use of the means to reach the gifts that are there.

These are the laws which govern human beings but there are other creatures which have different powers. For instance the jinn have different laws, suitable to their fiery nature. They can penetrate through solid walls by the nature of their being. They can take on any shape they wish. They have d i fferent laws which g o v e r n them; and the laws of things which are subject to them are those which were created for their sake.

The angels are created from light and they too have laws. They ascend to heaven and descend to earth by the command of their Lord. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - has created laws of ascent and descent for them as well as laws governing the taking on of different forms and all the things that enable them to perform their duties.

In the case of empirical knowledge, the intellect can apply it as it likes to the material things of existence. Then the intellect can also investigate the secrets which Allah has placed in the earth; the way it does that is either by direct witnessing or in the laboratory. However, the intellect has to stop at the outward forms of material existence. Regarding what is beyond the physical, or in other words unseen things, we can only take knowledge from those who have experience of it.

The unseen is a sphere which Allah did not create subject to the human intellect. For instance the intellect cannot say anything about the world of the angels or give us a sensory picture of an angel. It cannot tell us what its form is or what its nature is or the laws that govern it or how it lives or anything else of that sort.

That is also the case with the jinn, both the righteous among them and the rebellious jinn who are the shaytans that revolt against Allah's plan - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! The human intellect cannot provide us with a picture of them. Indeed, when Allah wants to give us a terrifying picture of the punishment of Jahannam (Hell) - and we seek refuge with Allah from it! - He says about the Tree of Zaqqum, which is the food of the people of the Fire:

"It is a tree that emerges from the base of the Blazing Fire. Its fruit are like the heads of the shaytans." (37:64-65)

Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - used the image of the heads of the shaytans because none of us has seen them. If you were to bring a number of artists and ask them to draw a picture of a shaytan, each of them would come up with a quite different picture from the others. He would draw the form which he imagines a shaytan to have. The imagination of one will not be the same as another in that respect but all will agree that the form of shaytan is both repulsive and frightening. By using the words, *"the heads of shaytans"* Allah paints for every man a picture which will make him terrified of the punishment of Jahannam. It provokes alarm in the hearts of all who read it so that fear of the punishment enters them. We seek refuge with Allah!

What is Unseen for Us

There are many things which are unseen for us, creatures and secrets which Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! has not acquainted us with nor made our intellects capable of encompassing. With regard to these things we have no choice but to take our knowledge of them from Allah Almighty who created them. He alone knows their laws. Allah calls our attention to that in His words:

"I did not let them witness the creation of the heavens and the earth nor the creation of themselves. I would not take as assistants any who lead astray." (18:51)

That is to say, both the creation of the heavens and the earth and also the creation of mankind were hidden from our intellects. We should not, therefore, dispute anything which Allah Almighty tells us about the creation and how it took place because otherwise we would stray from the truth. When a man comes and tells us something about the laws of jinn and angels, or the creation of existence and man, which is contrary to what Allah Almighty has told us, we ask him to produce his proof. If it is just a matter of speculation or imagination, we completely ignore it. If he has some sort of physical evidence, we discuss it. The evidence in this case is certainly spurious and intended to mislead.

Some years ago, for instance, the University of California in America announced that it had found the "missing link" between man and ape and that it had physical evidence that man was descended from the apes. When asked for their

evidence they said that it was a skull which they had come across in excavations: the skull of a man which had the jawbone of an ape. They said that they had also discovered the skull of an ape with a human jawbone. This was the "missing link" which the world had been searching for to support Darwin's theory that man is descended from the apes.

It soon came to light that the university had purchased these skulls from a archaeologist who had asked for ten million dollars for this "major discovery". When the skulls were taken and subjected to detailed scientific investigation at the highest levels with the participation of a great number of scientists, they were discovered to be frauds. It was clear that the archaeologist in question had taken a human skull and the jawbone of an ape, and the skull of an ape and a human jawbone, and stuck them together using a very subtle technique which the initial investigations undertaken by the University of California did not expose.

Such then was the physical evidence presented to prove a theory which is contrary to what Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - tells us about creation. It was spurious evidence manufactured by a clever swindler in order to deceive humanity.

If only people's intellects would adhere to what Allah Almighty has stated about things that are hidden from us, they would be spared much research which in the end will only lead to what Allah has told us anyway. All scientific research regarding what is beyond the material universe is nothing but speculation. It is not based on any real evidence and will not lead us to any real knowledge.

Existence and Science

When Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - created the universe, He placed in it overt powers and hidden powers. There are powers which we recognise and work with in the outward world: physical things which we see before us every day. We all share in sight and no one disagrees about the outward, perceptible world. But there are also hidden powers in existence. Those powers have their effects and have their role to play but we know nothing about them except what Allah wishes to show us.

To clarify what is meant by hidden powers we say that there is a difference between the actual existence of a thing and our perception of its existence. The

thing might exist and might be around us and affect our lives without our being able to perceive its existence. Indeed, sometimes we might deny its existence in spite of the fact that Allah Almighty has given us plenty of evidence that our lack of perception of the existence of something does not necessarily mean that it does not exist.

If we reflect on ordinary human life we find in it a thousand proofs that there can be a difference between the actual existence of a thing and knowledge of its existence. Indeed, all of human knowledge and the advances of human civilisation have arisen from our perceiving and making use of things whose existence was previously unknown.

Perhaps the easiest example to begin with is that of germs, o rganisms which are incredibly small and which enter a man's body and cause him to become ill. His entire body goes out of balance and his temperature rises. Specific symptoms appear such as spots, or the colour of his skin changes, and he feels pain. These changes happen because of a minuscule creature which has only recently been found to exist. The question which must be answered is whether these microbes and germs were only created recently or have existed since the creation of the universe. Of course they existed; it was just that their existence was not known about.

At a certain point Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - revealed to us some of His knowledge and we were able to find out about these microbes. We discovered that Allah had created a life-cycle for them and that they multiply and reproduce and that it is possible to eliminate them by using certain medicines. Medical science began to fill books with information about these microbes and their life-cycles. But those germs and m i c r o b e s certainly did not depend on our perception of them for their existence. They had always existed and carried out their role in creation, and our not perceiving them did not in any way stop them from doing so.

Every drop of blood contains red cells and white cells and dozens of others forms of which we knew nothing until very recently. If you take a drop of water and place it under a microscope you will see in myriad forms of life which we did not perceive nor know anything about before. The same applies to many many other things in existence.

There are Signs in The Universe

What is true in the microscopic world is also true of outer space. New stars are discovered every day. Did these stars exist before their existence was discovered or did they come into existence the moment that happened?

The same might be said of the resources inside the earth such as petroleum, iron, and other minerals. Did they come into existence the moment we discovered them? Or did we in fact discover their existence later than we should have done? We did not pay attention to what Allah Almighty told us in the Noble Qur'an - that there are treasures inside the earth. He says:

"To Him belongs everything in the heavens and every thing in the earth and everything in between them and everything under the ground." (20:5)

We should have looked at His words, *"e v e rything under the g round,"* and searched for the treasures hidden inside the earth sooner than we did!

In order to make this matter clearer we say that all the possibilities of existence have existed from the beginning of creation, but Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - only revealed them to us when He wanted us to find them and use them for our development, progress, and civilisation.

Man did not manufacture the atmosphere nor add anything to it, but Allah Almighty placed in it the possibility of transmitting sound from one distant part of the earth to another over huge distances. It became possible for someone to speak and for the whole world to hear him instantaneously. These possibilities were exploited by man when Allah willed him to discover how to do so. Even more than that, it became possible to use the special properties of the atmosphere to transmit pictures so that when a man landed on the moon, we were able to see him at the very moment he landed while we were sitting in our homes.

The Perception of Existence

All these possibilities already existed and no one can claim to have added anything to the special properties of the atmosphere. H o w e v e r, we were ignorant of these things and did not know of their existence even though they were there.

The same applies to every new thing which science discovers for us. Science does not create new things. It simply reveals to us some of the special properties already innate in the universe which we did not know about before. Every discovery has its time. When its time comes, it is unveiled. Allah Almighty shows it to His creation and they recognise it. If that discovery coincides with a researcher investigating the matter concerned, Allah will disclose it to him. If that is not the case, then the discovery will occur by what is sometimes called the law of coincidence. But there is in reality no such thing as coincidence. Everything comes to fruition by the decree of Allah and according to His will. So the secrets of existence and the events that happen in it, great or small, are all by the permission and with the knowledge of Allah. Read the words of the Almighty:

"He possesses the keys of the Unseen. No one knows them except Him. He knows everything in the land and the sea. No leaf falls but that He knows it. There is no seed in the darkness of the earth, and no wet thing and no dry thing, but that it is in a Clear Book." (6:59)

If we want to understand the picture better, we should recall the words of Allah Almighty in *Surat at-Takwir*:
"But you shall not will except if Allah wills, the Lord of all the Worlds." (81:29)

Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - used the words *"you shall not will"* in a general sense. He did not specify by that phrase one event rather than another. It refers to all that occurs in existence whatever form it takes. It is all by the will of Allah Almighty. When the will of Allah and man's will come together, then the thing happens. If they do not come together, it does not happen. So everything in existence is absolutely subject to the will of Allah Almighty. Nothing exists which can be called coincidence because all the events of existence exist are in order and were recorded by Allah Almighty before He created the universe. Indeed, all the events right up until the Day of Rising and beyond it are embraced by the knowledge of the Magnificent Creator of all existence.

The Forces of Existence are Many

From all of this it is quite clear that things which are hidden from us and which we cannot see actually do exist and carry out their appointed purposes in existence. When Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - tells us about things that are hidden from us, such as the angels for instance, then we must be

certain of their existence even though we cannot see them. We cannot make visual perception of things our sole criterion for their existence when Allah Almighty has given us thousands of proofs, even within the physical realm, of the existence of much that is hidden from our sight.

The angels, then, are among the forces of good which we cannot see in our daily lives but which carry out their duties in the most complete manner. As the Almighty says:

"They do not disobey Allah no matter what command He gives them; and they do all that they are commanded." (66:6)

Similarly, there are other powers in existence which desire evil for man. We do not see them nor recognise their existence but Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - has informed us about them as a mercy to us. He told us to seek refuge with Him from them. The shaytans are among those forces. The shaytans are rebellious jinn who reject the Revelations of Allah. There are righteous jinn and also disbelieving and rebellious jinn among the progeny of Iblis, as Allah says in *Surat al-Jinn*:

"Among us are there are righteous beings and among us are other than that. We follow many different paths." (72:11)

The shaytans are the enemies of man and desire evil and not good for him. That is why they try to push him into doing what will harm him and not benefit him. But Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - created the shaytans from fire and He created man from earth. Earth, as we know, is dark and heavy and the shaytans take from the fire of their creation something which gives them greater strength and power than man. For instance, they can see us but we cannot see them, as Allah Almighty informs us:

"He and his tribe see you from where you do not see them." (7:27)

The shaytans have constant vision of us even though we cannot see them. We would not know of their existence if Allah Almighty had not informed us of it. How would we be protected from their evil if Allah had not Almighty taught us how to seek refuge from them? Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - desires to remove our fear that harm will befall us from these forces that we do

not see but which see us, and He .has assured us that He will protect us and guard us. He does not sleep nor does He overlook anything. He sustains existence, that is to say He supports it every second. He says:

"Allah. There is no god but Him, the Living, the AllSustaining. Drowsiness does not overcome Him nor does sleep." (2:255)

Allah Almighty further desires to increase our peace of mind and tells us that He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and that therefore there is no creature in existence able to escape His will. Every creature is completely and utterly subject to the laws which the Creator made for it. It cannot rebel against them. That is so that we do not fear that any of Allah's creatures will rebel and do anything for which their Creator has not given permission. He says:

"To Him belongs everything in the heavens and the earth." (2:255)

In this way He increases our peace of mind. We might think that someone might possess such power of intercession with Allah as would make him able to do what he wishes without His permission so that he can do as he likes. Or someone might think that there was something in Allah's creation, which cannot counted or enumerated, which might be hidden from His knowledge or might escape, even if only for a fraction of a second, from the absolute of power of Allah Almighty. So He says:

"Who can intercede with Him except by His permis sion? He knows what is before them and what is after them. But they do not encompass any knowledge of Him except what He wills." (2:255)

Allah's Concern

Allah wants people to know that they are protected by Allah's concern as long as they obey Him and hold to Him even in the state when they have no power to defend themselves at all - while they are asleep. They should keep in mind that in the case of Allah Almighty, "*Drowsiness does not overcome Him nor does sleep."* That is why man can sleep soundly, safe and secure in the knowledge that the eye of Allah which never sleeps is protecting him. It is the power of Allah which is the source of all the capacities of everything else in existence. They are under His control and so people should have no fear that anything will harm them.

Just as Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! informs us about the shaytans who see us but whom we do not see, so He also informs us about two other hidden forces: magic and e n v y. If Allah had not told us about them, we would not have recognised them nor understood anything about them. However Allah has taught us about these two things and so we know how to guard ourselves from them by seeking refuge with Him from them.

Nothing in existence, no matter what the nature of its creation, has any power to bring harm or benefit to any other creature. No creature or genus should allow itself to be deluded into thinking that it has any intrinsic superiority or power. There is no force in existence that has any effectiveness whatsoever except that which Allah desires it to have.

When Iblis rebelled, he falsely assumed that the nature of his own creation raised him above the will of His Creator. So when Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - asked him to prostrate to Adam, his reply was as has come in the Noble Qur'an:

"I am better than him. You created me from fire and You created him from clay." (7:12)
And in another *ayat*, Iblis says:
"What! Me prostrate to one You have created out of clay?" (17:61)

In this instance Iblis took one of the elements of his creation which made him feel that he was intrinsically superior to man. He forgot that what each creature is given does not come from itself. It is from the Almighty and therefore, just as it is subject in its formation to the will of Allah, so it is also subject to the commands of Allah. No matter what the creational nature of Iblis was, that did not give him any reason for disobeying the commands of Allah and ascribing his strength to himself. Doing that made him an unbeliever.

Creatures can be deluded by blessing into thinking that the blessing they have been given makes them independent of the Giver of Blessing and that that blessing has been obtained by their own capabilities. In doing this they forget their Creator and rebel against Him who gave them the blessing. This is the case with Qarun who said:

"He said, 'I have only been given it on account of a knowledge I possess.'" (18:78)

He forgot that all knowledge is from Allah and that when He gave it to him, the gift of it should have increased him in thankfulness to Allah and obedience to His commands.

We have so far seen that there are hidden forces in existence which Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - created and which are governed by laws of which we know nothing and of whose nature we do not know anything except what Allah Almighty has told us. However, in spite of our ignorance about them, these forces nevertheless exist and have effects. Allah Almighty has also called our attention to the fact that even if one genus is by nature stronger than another, He is nonetheless able to subject it to a weaker one.

We must now examine a number of important questions:

What is magic?
Who are the people who practice it?
What is its effect on man?
Why did Allah Almighty send two angels to teach people

magic?

Chapter Two What is Magic?

Magic is mentioned in the Noble Qur'an and therefore we know that it is without doubt an existent reality. We should discuss it because it is one of the things which Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - saw fit to mention in His Immense Book. Magic is one of the hidden forces of existence and we should see what the Creator of the universe has told us about it.

The Arabic word for magic, "*s i h r*", is derived from the word *"sahar*" which is from the root **s-h-r**. *Sahar* is the time between the end of the night and the beginning of the day. It contains some of the shades of the darkness of night and some of the rays of the light of day. You cannot say that it is day, meaning daytime and light, nor say that it is night, meaning absolute darkness. So it has a double nature and not just one.

One type of magic gives the appearance that something is happening when in reality it is not actually happening at all. So the effect of this type of magic is on

the eye and it is the eye that is bewitched. It sees things which do not take place or happen. That is why Allah Almighty says about the magicians of Pharaoh:

"They cast a spell over the people's eyes and caused them to fear them. They produced a powerful magic." (7:116)

The sight is deceived but the actual substance has not changed. If we investigate magic in its most basic forms we find that
there is one type which man performs by his own abilities and another in which he seeks the assistance of superhuman forces,
that of the shaytans.
The magicians who perform simple forms of magic basically
rely on deceiving the eyes or what is known as sleight of hand.
Those are the ones who present what they call magic tricks in
gatherings. Their skill lies in the fact that they are trained to move
their hands so quickly that the eye does not see what has happened. This is why the spectator thinks that what has happened
before him is that the nature of things has changed. When, for
instance, a magician makes a glass of water disappear and then
brings it back again, or stretches his hand up into the air and produces things which you did not see there before, or makes things
disappear and other things appear, all that is what is called sleight
of hand. In reality, what happens is that the eyesight is deceived. Sight can be deceived by many things. For instance, the eye
supposes a mirage to be water when it is not. And sometimes a
point of light can be made to appear like a solid form. Its swift
movement is simply not able to be perceived by the eye. We also
see this effect when we turn on an electric fan and look at it. We
cannot see its real shape. It appears to us from the speed of the
movement as one solid shape. When we turn it off and the fan is
still, you can see it in its real shape and see all its blades and the
gaps between them and other details. You could not see these
while it was going, because of the speed of the movement. So the eye is deceived by swift movement. This is what conjurors rely on in sleight of hand manoeuvres and other magic tricks
which they perform. They rely on the speed of the movement of

the hand to deceive the eye and it appears as if they produce a sort of magic.

The Magic of the Eyes

However, there is another type of magic and it is that which we are really interested in discussing here. When we gave the simple example above we did so in order to make the matter easier for the reader to grasp, using a phenomenon which is seen and observed every day to allow us to understand the meaning of the deception of sight or the magic of the eye. However there is a higher form of it involving genuine illusion and bewitching of the eye which has no basis in ordinary experience.

Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - wanted to make us understand that magic is a type of effect on the eye making it see things which do not actually take place or exist at all. To understand this in more depth we must discuss the encounter of Musa, peace be upon him, with the magicians, and what Allah Almighty says about it:

"They said, 'Musa, will you throw or shall we be the first to throw?' He said, 'No, you throw!' And suddenly their ropes and staffs appeared to him, by their magic, to be slithering about." (20:65-66)

In this passage we should pay close attention to the words of Allah Almighty, *"a p p e a red to him."* In other words, what took place was a mere illusion and not reality at all. In the eyes of the magicians the ropes remained simply ropes but in the eyes of all who saw them they appeared as terrible serpents which they saw as real serpents slithering on the ground. This is known as hallucinatory magic. The eye sees what is not really there and imagines things which are not really happening. That being the case, what is the difference between this and what happened when Musa threw his staff?

The Magicians and the Miracle

The reason why the magicians prostrated and proclaimed their belief in the Lord of Musa when Musa's staff was thrown was that they saw the staff of Musa change into a real snake. Those magicians had made their magic bewitch the eyes of the people so that they began to imagine things which had no real existence.

But the eyes of the magicians were not affected by the magic and they continued to see things as they actually were. As we have already said, the ropes and staffs which the magicians threw remained ropes and staffs in their eyes. When they saw the staff of Musa really change into a terrible snake, they knew that this was not magic. It was real. They recognised that this was not a mere deception of the eyes but was a real transformation of the nature of things. A staff cannot be transformed into a real snake except by Allah Almighty. Thus they recognised that what had taken place before them was a true miracle which only the Creator is capable of making happen. They therefore realised that Musa, peace be upon him, was a Messenger from Allah and not a magician.

Anyone who is skilled in a craft knows its secrets. He is the one who truly understands it in such a way that no one can deceive him regarding it. The magicians were absolutely certain by their knowledge of magic and its nature that what had happened in front of them was truly a miracle and not magic; and consequently they immediately accepted the fact that Musa really was the Messenger of Allah:

"The magicians threw themselves down in pro s t r a t i o n . They said, 'We believe in the Lord of Harun and Musa.'" (20:70)

Pharaoh was astonished at what happened. What could make the great magicians, whom he had brought, prostrate? He had presumed that they would discredit Musa, peace be upon him, and expose his magic to the people. How could they now prostrate to the God of Musa? He said to them, as the Noble Qur'an relates to us:

"He said, 'Do you believe in him before I give you per mission? He is your chief, the one who taught you magic.'" (20:71)

That could only happen because Pharaoh himself was not a magician and did not know anything about magic. His eyes were bewitched like the eyes of all the rest of those present. He could not differentiate between magic and a true miracle. So he saw the ropes and staffs of the magicians as slithering snakes and also saw M u s a 's staff as a slithering snake. He could not distinguish between the real and the illusory because his eyes were bewitched. So he spoke in a way which was in accordance with his own false claim to divinity.

Since it was necessary to explain the sudden prostration of the magicians, he could not find anything to say except that he was amazed that the magicians should prostrate. If he had been a real god, as he claimed, he would have compelled the magicians not to prostrate. However, because he was a false god whose powers were only human, he did not know that the magicians were going to prostrate. His knowledge was only human knowledge. He was unable to force them not to prostrate because what happened came about suddenly. His limited knowledge could not control events in spite of his claim to divinity.

The spuriousness of Pharaoh's claim to divinity was exposed after this sudden event had taken him by surprise. He in fact believed that Musa, peace be upon him, was the principal magician and that he was the one who had taught the others magic. In his eyes they prostrated to acknowledge his leadership and to honour his skill. But the magicians gave Pharaoh the true answer, and they countered him by saying that Musa was not a magician but rather a Messenger from Allah, and that what had happened when Musa threw his staff was not magic but a miracle. Pharaoh wanted to save his honour by threatening and intimidating the magicians, saying that he would punish and kill them in the hope that they would retract what they had done when they prostrated to the Lord of Musa and Harun.

Pharaoh and the Magicians

The Noble Qur'an relates to us what happened when Pharaoh made his threat:

"I will cut off your hands and feet alternately and will have you crucified on palm trunks. Then you will know for c e rtain which one of us has the more severe and longer lasting punishment." (20:71)

Pharaoh made this threat, supposing that it would be enough to make the magicians revert to worshipping him and make them reveal the truth. He expected them to say that what had happened was owing to a prior agreement they had made and concealed from Pharaoh to make Musa their king because he was the chief magician. Allah Almighty says about this:

"Pharaoh said, 'Have you believed in him before I gave you permission to? This is just some plot you have hatched in the city to drive its people from it. You will soon know!'" (7:123)

But all these threats and suspicions on the part of Pharaoh did not have any result because the magicians had seen the miracle and were certain of it. That is why they refused to bow to the threats of Pharaoh. The certainty of belief had entered their hearts. The light of Allah was firm in those same hearts which had come to challenge and expose Musa, peace be upon him. They became the first to believe in him. The belief of the magicians was strong because they saw the miracle and acknowledged it and understood it. That is why Allah Almighty says:

"They said, 'We will never prefer you over the clear signs that have come to us nor over Him who brought us into being. Decide on any judgement you like. Your juris diction only encompasses the life of this world.'" (20:72)

The Use of Terror

No real change took place when the magicians threw down the things that they threw with Musa. The change was merely in the eyes of the beholders. If the staff of Musa, peace be upon him, had remained a mere staff, the magicians would have been the first to know that because none of their eyes were bewitched. But in fact they recognised that its actual nature had been changed into that of a snake.

Magic, then, means making people imagine something to be real when no real change has taken place. It produces terror, fear and alarm in the heart of the person who has been bewitched and makes him submit to the magician and do anything he desires. That is why Allah Almighty says, *"They cast a spell over the peo ple's eyes and caused them to fear them,*" with particular regard to the words, "*they caused them to fear them*".

It is known that magicians try as hard as they can to produce fear in people by using things like skulls and terrifying voices so that their victims will be disposed to feel greater terror and to submit more readily. Terror fills them merely by seeing the things which the magician uses to produce his illusion; by means of this terror the magician is able to effect what he wants and to make people do what he wants. He is able to impose his will on the bewitched and they become like putty in the magician's hands.

The Power of Magic or the Help of the Shaytans

But does this deception happen by the power of magic or by the shaytans' helping the magician? It is well-established that the shaytans are connected to magic and that they are the ones who taught it and spread it after the two angels, Harut and Marut, made it known in Babylon. Allah Almighty tells us in the Noble Qur'an that after magic became known, the shaytans used it to tempt people because it is a temptation and disbelief. The goal of the shaytans is to mislead man and to lure him far from the Path and to spread disbelief and misguidance. Shaytan is the enemy of man and desires evil and harm for him. Allah Almighty says:

"Sulayman did not reject faith, but the shaytans did reject it and taught people magic." (2:102)

Allah tells us that the shaytans teach people magic, and so it is clear that the shaytans must be deeply involved with it in order to be able to teach it. It means that they must know it well because you cannot teach something to someone else unless you are completely proficient in it. So the shaytans are deeply involved with magic and they have been trying to spread it since it was brought down by the angels, Harut and Marut.

The Shaytans Take on Forms

The help magicians get from the shaytans enables them to trick people because it entails one of the forces which are different from those known to mankind. The reason for this is that Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - created the shaytans from fire and so they have the ability to take on different forms. The shaytans of the jinn can take the form of anything they want. Man has no capacity for this shape-shifting nor does he recognise it. A man cannot see a shaytan except when he takes on a form which is subject to the laws of human vision.

When a shaytan takes on a physical form, the laws of the form which he takes on govern that form. So when he takes on the form of a man, he is subject to the laws of man. For instance, if he were to be shot, he would die instantly. This is why when a shaytan appears in any form, he only remains in it for a short time and then disappears: he knows that anyone who sees him in that form is able to kill him.

This happened to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, when he was praying in the mosque. Shaytan appeared to him in the form of a man and the Messenger, peace be upon him, seized him and wanted to tie him to a pillar of the mosque. However, at that moment he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, remembered the supplication of Sulayman which he had made to Allah Almighty to give him a kingdom which He would not give to anyone except him:

"He said, 'My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom which no one after me will be allowed. Truly You are the endless Giver of gifts.'" (38:35)

The books of *S i r a* relate that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said about the incident, "Last night an *'ifrit* of the *jinn* suddenly appeared before me attempting to interrupt my prayer but Allah gave me power over him. I wanted to tie him to one of the pillars of the mosque so that you could all see him in the morning, but I remembered the words of my brother Sulayman*, 'My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom which no one after me will be allowed. Truly You are the endless Giver of gifts.' "* He said that he sent him off in disgrace.

The Law of Shape-Shifting

Thus the jinn have the power to change shape but are then subject to the laws of the form which they take on. When a jinn takes on the form of man, you can seize him and kill him and he cannot escape from the law of the form he has taken. That is why when the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, seized the jinn who had taken on human form, he was subject to human laws and it was possible to tie him to the pillar of the mosque and for people to see him.

If jinn had been able to take on forms without leaving their own laws for the laws of the forms which they take on, the rebellious jinn would have terrified us and turned our lives into a hell. But this law which rules them mitigates for us many of the machinations and troubles which the shaytans of the jinn would otherwise have been able to inflict on the world of men.

The Kingdom of Saba' and the Jinn

There are types of magic in which the help of the shaytans of the jinn is sought because in them people seek the help of creatures whose laws are more powerful than those which govern mankind. That is the case because of the element from which they were created. Because we are created from earth our movements are limited and our speed is limited. We cannot, for instance, walk through solid objects. However, the jinn, because they are created from fire, are not subject to the same constraints as we are and they can do so.

To make that easier to grasp we might make use of the following example. If you take an apple, which is created from earth, and place it behind a wall, you cannot tell it is there. The reason for this is that the substance of the earth from which it is created cannot pass through the wall. However, if you light a fire on the other side of the wall and sit in front of it, after a short time you feel the warmth penetrating the wall and reaching through to you. That is because fire is more permeable than earth.

When Sulayman wanted the throne of Bilqis to be brought from her kingdom, and there were both men and jinn in the assembly of Sulayman, not one man, no matter how great his strength, was able rise to the challenge because all were governed by the laws of their nature. But an '*ifrit* of the jinn did come forward and accept the challenge. About that Allah Almighty says:

"He said, 'O Nobles! Which of you will bring her throne to me before they come to me in submission?' An ifrit of the jinn said, 'I will bring it to you before you get up from where you sit.'" (27:38-39)

This discussion took place after the Queen of Sheba had already left the capital of her kingdom and was on her way to Sulayman. In other words, a journey using human strength and powers was already under way. The Queen of Sheba was undoubtedly assisted in her journey by the fastest kinds of transport in her time because she was the Queen of a nation which possessed much strength and great power, as Allah Almighty tells us in the Noble Qur'an. When a nation achieves much strength and great power, it is because it possesses the most advanced techniques of its time.

The conversation which took place between the Queen of Sheba and her ministers, counsellors and generals after she had received Sulayman's letter which the hoopoe carried to her, makes it clear to us that this kingdom was one of the

strongest kingdoms of the time. The Noble Qur'an transmits to us what happened, as the Almighty says:

"She said, 'O Nobles! State your opinion concerning this matter of mine. It is not my habit to make a final choice until I have heard what you have to say.' They said, 'We possess strength and we possess great force. The mat ter is up to you. Look, therefore, to what you command.'"

(27:32-33)

The jinn who was intending to bring the throne would, therefore, have had to possess enormous strength and speed to have been able to travel to the palace of Queen Bilqis, fetch the throne and produce it before the Queen and those with her arrived in Sulayman's kingdom. Since the Queen of Sheba was already well on the way and the jinn would have to reach her palace and return to Sulayman before the Queen and her party arrived, his speed would therefore have had to be at least five times the speed at which the Queen was travelling in order for him to have been able to bring it so that it would be there for her to see the moment she arrived.

We can tell from this incident that the speed at which the jinn can travel is many times greater than the speed possible for human beings and that the jinn possess the strength to move something from one place to another in a way which is far beyond the capacity of men.

The Capabilities of Jinn and Capabilities of Men

So we know that the jinn can take on different forms and that they possess amazing speed and power. We also know that the superior capabilities of the jinn come from the element of fire from which they were created and that they can do things which men cannot do and are not suited for. Therefore, anyone who seeks the help of magic using the power of the jinn has access to strength and power above the strength and power of an ordinary human being. That is why he can do things which ordinary people cannot do.

Allah Almighty desires justice. He only distinguishes between one creature and another according to their fear of Him and by their following of His Way. He is the Lord of all existence and He is my Lord and your Lord. For that reason He

did not give any creature any way of being automatically superior to another, for if He had done so darkness and injustice would inevitably have spread across the earth. But someone who has his own power and strength and then seeks the help of the strength of another who, by virtue of the element of his creation, is greater than mankind, has an unfair advantage which will almost certainly lead him to commit injustice because it is always excessive power that leads people to be unjust and to spread corruption in the earth. In His wisdom Allah Almighty desires man to be tested by good and evil. As He says:

"We test you with both evil and good as a trial." (21:35)

Equality of possibilities is what ensures security, safety and peace. Allah desires a safe life for His slaves. If we, for instance, look at peace in the world we find that the thing which makes peace continue and endure is the fact that there is equality of possibilities, as happens in the case where one strong state has another strong state opposite it. But if one state feels that it is stronger than its neighbours or than the power facing it, it will attack and invade. When their strength is equal, each of them is deterred from attacking by their fear of the other. That is the reason for the diplomatic policy of nuclear deterrence. It is what has prevented the outbreak of another world war. If one power had felt that it was more powerful than another, it would have started a war because the balance had tipped in its favour. The same principle applies in other situations.

So when someone seeks the help of a stronger power than that possessed by man, it upsets human society. The same thing happens when someone has a gun in the middle of a group of people who are unarmed. His superior power inevitably leads to injustice and to oppression. That is why Allah forbade seeking the help of magic and considers it to be a type of disbelief: because magicians believe that through their knowledge they can control others.

To sum up what we have said so far: we have seen that there are hidden forces in existence and that one of those forces is magic. Magic works by giving the illusion of something happening which is not actually happening in reality. What are in fact bewitched are people's eyes. Magic provokes fear in people and it is used to make them submit to what the magician wants. And magicians seek the help of forces which are stronger than man by virtue of the element of their creation - the shaytans of the jinn.

Now we must look at the story of Harut and Marut, who were the two angels whom Allah - glory be to Him and may He be e x a l t e d ! - sent down to teach people magic.

Chapter Three Harut and Marut

If we want to go back to the beginning of the story of magic, we must look at this noble *ayat*:

"They follow what the shaytans recited during the reign of Sulayman. Sulayman did not reject faith, but the shay tans did reject it and they taught people magic and what had been revealed to the two angels in Babylon, Haru t and Marut. They taught no one until they had told him, 'We are merely a trial and a temptation, so do not disbe lieve.' From the two of them people learned how to sepa rate a man from his wife. They cannot harm anyone by it, except with the permission of Allah. They have learned what will harm them and bring them no benefit. They know that anyone who deals in it will have no share in the Next World. How evil is the thing that they have sold themselves for if they did but know." (2:102)

We know from this noble *a y a t* that magic was revealed by Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - and that He revealed it through two angels at Babylon called Harut and Marut; that magic is a temptation which leads to disbelief; that it is not used to bring benefit but rather to harm people and separate man and wife; that the use of magic has no reward in the Next World except the Fire; and that anyone who uses magic will meet an evil end and die an unbeliever. This is what the noble *ayat* tells us in general about magic. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - wanted to point out to us the harm that results from the use of magic, both for those who practice it and for those who teach it, and also to let us know that the shaytans or rebellious jinn who rebel against Allah are strongly implicated in it.

Being Tested by Good and Evil

We should begin with Harut and Marut. They were the two angels whom Allah sent down to teach people magic. Allah Almighty has created trials and tests for His creation and these trials are either by good or evil. Indeed from beginning to end the life of this world is one great trial in which man is put to the test as can be seen from the words of Allah Almighty:

"We test you with both evil and good as a trial." (21:35)

Man is tried and tested through his wealth, in which the good and glory of this world lie, so as to see whether this blessing increases him in obedience to Allah by his using it for what Allah has commanded in the way of good, *sadaqa* and feeding the poor, or whether he uses it for evil purposes by spending it in acts of disobedience to Allah. The same applies to magic. It is a trial and it gives man power beyond what he would have if he was simply left to his own devices, because anyone who learns magic can use the shaytans to serve his desires and, as we have seen, because of the way they have been created the shaytans are stronger than man. In theory this power could be used for either good or evil. However, those who use it have an unfair advantage over other human beings and in the nature of things this advantage leads them to commit injustice and harm. Moreover, Allah Almighty Himself has decreed that there is no benefit to be gained from magic.

Why were there Two Angels?

The two angels, Harut and Marut, descended to the earth by the command of Allah to teach people magic. It is part of the wisdom of Allah Almighty that He chose two angels, creatures of a different genus and constitution from mankind. Firstly because angels do not benefit from magic, having no need of it, and therefore there could be no suspicion of self-seeking involved. We all know that magic does not benefit but on the contrary is harmful. If Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - had chosen a human Messenger to teach people magic, people would have believed that magic was something useful and would have said, "The Messenger of Allah taught us it. Messengers are models for us and therefore we should follow our model and do as he does." Others might have argued: "If magic is evil and leads to disbelief, why did Allah send a Messenger with it when Messengers only bring beneficial things from Allah?"

However, the angels Harut and Marut who taught people magic did not use it, since it did not benefit them in any way. They also warned people that magic was a trial which leads to disbelief. In that way the knowledge which Allah Almighty desired mankind to have reached them by the means Allah desired and with the clear warning that magic is evil and a temptation.

There are many things related about Harut and Marut. One of these transmissions is based on the fact that when Allah Almighty told the angels about the creation of Adam, they said:

*"Will You place on it one who will corrupt it and shed blood, while we glorify Your praise and call You holy?" (*2:30)

The story continues by claiming that when they said this, Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - asked them to choose two angels to descend to earth to see how they would behave there. They chose Harut and Marut. When Harut and Marut came down to the earth, a stunningly beautiful woman came to them and they solicited her. She said, "I will have nothing to do with you until you associate something else with Allah." They refused to do this. She left them and returned with a child and said, "I will not give myself to you until you kill this child." They refused to kill it. So she went and returned to them with a glass of wine and said, "I will not give myself to you until you drink this wine." Seeing no harm in this, they drank it and then, in their drunkenness, associated something with Allah, killed the child and committed adultery.

Although this story is related in some books of *tafsir*, it is not true. Firstly, because the angels, *"do not disobey Allah no matter what command He gives them and do as they are commanded."* S e c o n d l y, an essential part of Muslim belief is that Allah's Messengers always fulfil what Allah Almighty has charged them with. Those two angels were ordered to teach people magic and c h a rged with warning whomever they taught that magic was a temptation and would lead to disbelief. And that is what they did. We have only reported this story in order to let people know that it is not true. It is fabricated. Harut and Marut carried out the task which Allah had given them to do.

What we do know is that Allah sent two angels to teach people magic. Magic is a science by which man can gain the help of the jinn. The best course for all men, however, is not to learn it. Otherwise, they will be tempted by it although it contains no real benefit for them.

We used as an illustration for what can happen the example of a man who learns how to use weapons among people who do not know anything about the use of weapons. Then he buys himself a gun and says, "I will use it to defend people from injustice." The trouble is that the moment he has the weapon, he will be

unable to keep himself from using it to tyrannise others. The superior power it gives him is bound eventually to lead him to injustice and oppression and filling the world with corruption.

Magic and Sulayman

When the Noble Qur'an discusses magic, it mentions what happened during the time of Sulayman, peace be upon him. Did magic, then, originate in the time of Sulayman? Did the angels Harut and Marut descend during his time?

In fact it is well-established that magic came down before the time of Sulayman since magic was prevalent in the time of Musa, peace be upon him. The Noble Qur'an tells us what happened between Musa and the magicians of Pharaoh. Sulayman, son of Da'ud, and Da'ud, peace be upon them both, came after Musa, as the Noble Qur'an tells us when Allah says:

"What do you think about the nobles of the tribe of Israel after the time of Musa, when they said to one of their Prophets, 'Appoint a king for us and we will fight in the way of Allah!'" (2:246)

Those people of the tribe of Israel who came after Musa asked this of one of their Prophets who came after Musa. There were many Prophets among the tribe of Israel because they frequently rebelled against Allah Almighty. Those people among the tribe of Israel asked Allah to send them a king so that they could fight in the way of Allah. So He sent them a king and they went out to fight after having first refused to do so and then most of them fled, only a very few remaining. They went to fight a tyrannical king named Goliath (Jalut). Allah says:

"Da'ud killed Jalut, and Allah gave him kingship and wisdom." (2:251)

Thus Da'ud came after Musa and Sulayman was the son of Da'ud. So it can be seen that magic definitely existed on the earth before Sulayman and before Musa, peace be upon both of them. Indeed the Noble Qur'an mentions to us the occurrence of magic during the time of the people of Salih, peace be upon him. He was one of the Prophets of Allah who came before Ibrahim the Friend, peace be upon him. When Salih came to call his people to the Path of Allah, they

accused him of being one of the bewitched, according to what Allah Almighty says:

"They said, 'You are merely someone bewitched.'" (26:153)

From this we know that magic must have been known to the people of Salih or else they could not have accused him of being bewitched. So this leads us to the fact that Harut and Marut descended to earth and taught people magic in very ancient times, long before Sulayman. So what is the reason for the *ayats* in which Harut and Marut are mentioned in the Noble Qur'an being connected with Sulayman? When we examine the *a y a t s* just before these *ayats*, we find that they deal with the Jews. Allah Almighty says in them:

"When a Messenger comes to them from Allah, confirm ing what is with them, a group of those who have been given the Book disdainfully cast the Book of Allah behind their backs, just as if they did not know." (2:101)

In this noble *ayat* Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - informs us that the Noble Qur'an came to confirm the Torah of the Jews, but they denied the Qur'an even though they recognised that it was the truth. They cast their own Book, the Torah, behind their backs, meaning that they did not pay any attention to it, so that there would be no proof against them regarding the truth of the Qur'an. They took the position of someone who does not know. It was as if they did not know what had been revealed in the Torah about the coming of the Messenger of Allah. They did not know the penalty they would pay for doing that.

Those people, the Jews, brought what the shaytans had recited during the days of the kingdom of Sulayman. It was as if they were seeking help from what the shaytans had recited which had introduced disbelief into the Torah. They used this disbelief and these lies to aid and abet them in their denial of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and the Noble Qur'an. For this reason the noble *ayat* was sent down in connection with Sulayman, peace be upon him, and the shaytans and magic: in order to expose the alterations the Jews had made in their Book to avoid their having to believe in the Qur'an and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

The Shaytans Taught People Magic

The Jews accused the Prophet of Allah, Sulayman, peace be upon him, of disbelief and of using magic. So the Noble Qur'an cleared Sulayman of this false charge. The Almighty says:

"Sulayman did not reject faith but the shaytans did reject it and taught people magic." (2:102)

Magic descended to the earth a long time before Sulayman and the shaytans spread it among people in order to wreak corruption in the earth. How was it possible for the shaytans to teach people magic and spread knowledge of it among mankind? The shaytans are able to whisper evil to people and inspire their friends, telling them secretly to spread disbelief and heresy in the earth. They communicate to their human friends secret information which is called inspiration to indicate that it is hidden instruction. It is only understood and perceived by him who receives it. Allah Almighty says in His Noble Book:

"The shaytans inspire their friends to dispute with you. If you obeyed them you would be idolworshippers." (6:121)

Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - tells us in the Noble Qur'an how the shaytans inspire their friends. He says:

"Anyone who shuts his eyes to the remembrance of the All Merciful, We consign a shaytan to him and he becomes his intimate." (43:36)

The Almighty further says:

"We have consigned to them intimates who have beauti fied for them what is before them and behind them. And the Word regarding the nations, both of jinn and men, who passed away before them has been realised against them. Certainly they were losers." (41:25)

The intimates referred to are shaytans who whisper evil to people and try to constrain them into taking the path which leads to the Fire. Every human has one of these intimates who tries to get him to take this path. Regarding this the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, says in the noble *hadith*:

"'There is not one of you who has not been consigned an intimate from among the shaytans.' They said, 'Even you, Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'Yes, even me. But Allah helped me against him and he surrendered.'"

The Shaytans Inspire Their Friends

Some people find it strange that what the shaytans say to their friends is called inspiration (*wahy*). The meaning of inspiration is simply to inform about something secretly. The following example may help clarify it. If a troublesome guest comes and you do not want to receive him, you agree with your son or servant on a certain sign. When he sees the sign, he understands and gets rid of the guest. In this case the communication is achieved by a secret means which is only understood by the communicator and the one he is communicating with. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - gives inspiration to human beings as He says:

"It is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by direct inspiration." (42:51)
Allah Almighty gives inspiration both to human Messengers and also to ordinary human beings, as when He says:
"We inspired to Musa's mother." (28:7)
And He also gives inspiration to the bees:
"Your Lord inspired to the bees." (16:68)
He even gives inspiration to inanimate things:

"When the earth is shaken with a mighty shaking; and the earth brings forth her burdens; and man says, 'What ails her?'; upon that day she shall tell her tidings for that her Lord has inspired her." (99:1-5)

Thus inspiration can take different forms. Allah inspires the Messengers and inspires the angels, and He inspires human beings other than the Messengers. He inspires the bees and He inspires inanimate things. He inspires whomever or whatever He wishes to whatever He wishes. However, when the word "*wahy*" is used as a technical term, it always means a communication from Allah to one of the Messengers.

The Shaytans' Knowledge of the Unseen

When Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - tells us that the shaytans, the rebellious jinn, inspire their friends and asks us not to obey them or else we will become idol-worshippers, a question arises. What do the shaytans actually inspire their friends with?

In the past the shaytans used to eavesdrop in the heavens and they had seats or special places from where they used to do this. They would hear the commands which were coming down to the angels with regard to future events and other things related to their duties in creation. Then they would take these commands and hurry with them to their friends among the soothsayers and magicians after interpolating superstitions and lies and other things which would entice people into disbelief and disobedience to Allah instead of obedience and belief

They used to go to those soothsayers and magicians and amaze them by mentioning things that were going to happen. In that way they made them imagine they had genuine knowledge. Once they had persuaded them to believe them they called them to disbelief and forged lies against Allah by inserting things in His books which He did not command and altering and changing them according to their whims.

H o w e v e r, when the message of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, came, Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - stopped the shaytans from eavesdropping and it became impossible for the shaytans to meddle with the truth or to eavesdrop in Heaven. If they did they would be burned by meteors. The Noble Qur'an tells us about this in *Surat al-Jinn*:

"We tried as usual to travel to heaven in search of news but found it filled with fierce guards and meteors. We used to sit there on special seats to listen in. But anyone listen ing now finds a fiery meteor in wait for him." (72:8-9)

So the shaytans used to eavesdrop and work corruption in the earth in order to spread disbelief and misguidance. When the Message of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, came, Allah Almighty positioned fierce guards from among the angels. When any shaytan came near, he found a flaming meteor awaiting him which was shot at him to burn him. Thus Allah preserved His *d e e n* and His Qur'an from any manipulation by Shaytan.

Sulayman, peace be upon him, was the only Prophet to rule over the jinn and shaytans. They were made subject to him by the power of Allah Almighty. That is why He was able to collect the books of magic and their spells and to punish any of the shaytans who rebelled. Sulayman prayed to his Lord to give him, as well as the Message, a kingdom which no one had ever obtained before him and which no one after him ever would. Allah says about that in the Noble Qur'an:

"He said, 'My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom which no one after me will be allowed. Truly You are the Endless Giver of gifts.' So We made the wind subservient to him, to blow at his command, softly, wherever he directed it to go, and the shaytans, every builder and diver, and others of them, yoked together in chains." (38:35-38)

We know from this that Sulayman, peace be upon him, was granted a kingdom which no Prophet before him or after him was given; and that among the things Allah subjected to him were the shaytans who built magnificent buildings for him and undertook difficult tasks for him which no human being was able to undertake. One group of the jinn used to dive into the sea for him and bring out any pearls or other precious thing he desired. Another group, those who disobeyed King Sulayman, were yoked together with chains and shackles.

It is not in any way strange that Sulayman should have been a Prophet and a King at the same time. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was himself given a choice between being a slave Messenger or a king Messenger who would have a vast kingdom. He chose to be a slave Messenger because this position is higher in the eyes of Allah Almighty.

During the time of Sulayman, peace be upon him, the shaytans used to use magic to injure people. Sulayman knew about this and so he collected together all the books of magic. It is said that he buried them somewhere in the earth in order to save people from harm and it is also said that he put them under his throne.

When Sulayman died, the shaytans pointed out to people the place where these books were buried. They claimed that it was by means of the books that Sulayman had subjected the jinn, men and the winds and everything else in created existence to his command; and that anyone who read them would likewise have existence under his control and subject to his will. This amounts to disbelief and Sulayman was far removed from that.

All existence was made subject to Sulayman by the power of Allah Almighty alone, not by magic. The shaytans wanted to make people think that it was magic which had accomplished this so that they would disbelieve in Allah Almighty and believe in the power of magic. Anyone who believes in the power of magic is an unbeliever and anyone who practices magic is an unbeliever. Sulayman, peace be upon him, was free of any suspicion of disbelief. Indeed Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - declares his innocence in the Noble Qur'an.

Magic and Control of this World

The Shaytans made their human friends believe that Sulayman was given a kingdom, which no one except him was given, by virtue of his knowledge of magic. As we have said, that is a totally false allegation. Sulayman was given his kingdom by the command of Allah Almighty. He received the blessing of Allah with acknowledgement and thankfulness. Sulayman understood the language of the birds, the language of the ants and the glorification of the mountains. Allah Almighty says about that:

"Then, when they reached the Valley of the Ants, an ant said, 'O ants! Go down into your homes so that Sulayman and his troops do not crush you without being aware of it.' He smiled, laughing at its words, and said: 'O Lord , keep me thankful for Your blessing You blessed me and my p a rents with, and keep me acting rightly, pleasing Yo u , and admit me, by Your merc y, among Your righteous slaves.'"
(27:18-19)

Thus we see that Sulayman knew that all he was given, and the subjection of all the species to him, was purely from Allah Almighty and His power. He was thankful to Allah for His blessing upon him and asked Him to give him success in performing righteous actions.

In giving Sulayman a kingdom greater than He had gave to any other human being, Allah wanted to call our attention to two important truths. The first is that the power of Allah in His existence is unrestricted and absolute. Allah Almighty has created creatures of different species and from different elements, which does give some species power and strength over others; but He wants us to know that everything happens by His power alone. He is the Almighty Creator who can make forces possessing greater power subject to someone who, by

reason of the nature of his creation, has less innate power and strength than themselves.

He subjected to Sulayman things that Sulayman, because he was human, would never have been able to subject to himself. Allah placed them under his control and subject to his command to do whatever he wished. No one can claim power by his own right. Every kind of strength and power obtained by any creature is from Allah Almighty. Allah Almighty wanted us to see that what Sulayman obtained was not by his own power but was from Allah alone. He even gave to someone in the kingdom of Sulayman more knowledge than Sulayman himself had! The Noble Qur ' a n relates what happened between Sulayman and the hoopoe. When he reviewed his kingdom, Sulayman found that the hoopoe was absent and threatened to punish it. When the hoopoe did come to him, what did it say? Read the words of Allah Almighty:

"I have encompassed something you have not and bring to you from Sheba definite news." (27:22)

So we see that Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted!
- gave the hoopoe, who was one of the troops of Sulayman, some knowledge which He had not given to Sulayman himself, in order that we should know that all knowledge truly is from Allah Almighty and that we do not possess anything unless Allah wishes it. So Sulayman, to whom Allah had given all that kingdom, did not know what the hoopoe knew. It was the same with Musa, peace be upon him, he who spoke to Allah and was also His Messenger. Did he not go to a man whom Allah had given knowledge and ask him to teach him some of it? Allah Almighty says:

"They found a slave of ours whom We had given mercy from Our Presence and also given knowledge direct from Us. Musa said to him, 'May I follow you and you teach me some of the right guidance you have been taught?'" (18:65-66)

Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - told us this so that we could know with certainty that everything is from Allah and that the absolute and unrestricted power of Allah in the universe is what actually governs it and not any power possessed by any of Allah's creatures, however close they might be to Allah Almighty; so that we know with certainty that all strength and power belong to Allah.

The Kingdom of Sulayman and People's Belief

The second truth Allah Almighty wants to call our attention to is that He sent Prophets and Messengers and some people opposed them and the forces of evil resisted them and some people rejected them. It is vital, however, for us to realise that all this did not constitute some kind of rebellion against the will of Allah Almighty. It was simply rebellion against the religion of Allah, making use of the freedom of choice which Allah has given us in respect of following His guidance.

Allah sent human Messengers and He sent a Messenger and king called Sulayman. He gave him a kingdom which he had not given to any other human being and made him obeyed as kings are obeyed. Allah gave him the power to punish all who failed to follow his commands - among men, jinn and others. That is why there were those who believed in Sulayman of their own volition and others who believed out of fear of Sulayman's punishment. Did not Sulayman say this when he reviewed his kingdom and did not see the hoopoe among those present?

"I will certainly punish him most severely or slaughter him, or he must bring me clear authority." (27:21)

So Allah Almighty is able to send a Prophet and give him a kingdom and subjugate people by the force of his power so that they believe, just as He could compel the whole of His creation to believe if He willed:

"If We willed We could send down a sign from heaven to them, and then their necks would be lowered to it in sub jection." (26:4)

In other words Allah Almighty wants to call our attention to the fact that He has the power to force people to believe by sending a Prophet and giving him a kingdom. He also has the power to compel all of His creation to believe. However, He - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - wants His slaves to enter the *d e e n* o f Allah out of love and from their own choice and so He sent Messengers who were His slaves so that people would come to Him in belief out of love.

We have seen in this chapter that Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - is He who sent down the science of magic by means of two angels and sent it

down to test people in their belief. Those two angels carried out their task, as Allah Almighty had commanded them. They taught whatever people they taught and then warned them that magic is a trial and that it leads to disbelief. We seek refuge with Allah!

All that has been said about Sulayman, peace be upon him, taking his kingdom by way of magic and the power of magic is lies and disbelief. All strength belongs to Allah Almighty. None of the forces of the earth possesses any power to benefit or harm themselves, nor of life or death or resurrection, except as Allah wills. The shaytans, the rebellious jinn who have left the Path of Allah, used to have seats in the heaven where they would eavesdrop on what was descending to earth. They used to exploit this hearsay with their friends among the soothsayers and magicians in order to make alterations in the religion of Allah and to spread disbelief instead of belief.

The *ayats* concerning this matter mention certain effects which the use of magic has. How does magic separate a man from his wife? How does it cause harm to people? How are the magicians the first to be harmed by magic? We will examine these matters in the next chapter.

Chapter Four Magic Harms and Does Not Benefit

We spoke earlier about magic, how it is the eye which is bewitched, and how it sees things that do not really exist. Magic does not change reality nor alter anything. The magician induces terror in the person bewitched and makes him imagine things. His will becomes subject to that of the the magician who then makes him do whatever he wants. This being the case, how does it follow that magic is able to separate a man from his wife and cause other kinds of harm?

The Noble Qur'an says:

"From the two of them people learned how to separate a man from his wife. They do not harm anyone by it, except with the permission of Allah." (2:102)

To begin with, it should be made quite clear that it is better for no one to learn magic in the first place. People will only be tempted by it, thinking to gain benefit from it when it will do nothing but harm them. We have already likened this to someone who owns a weapon among people who do not carry any weapons. The

special advantage this gives him will inevitably cause him to oppress the others and lead him to commit injustice and cause corruption. Since magic is a science which enables man to subjugate the power of the jinn to his service, someone might say, "I will learn magic, but I will only use it for good." We say to anyone who says this, "You say this at a moment when you are tranquil. You like this possibility of knowledge which will give you superiority over other people. But can you guarantee that when you have this power, you will not use it for purposes of oppression?"

Let us suppose a young man asks his father to buy him a gun, but his father refuses to grant the request. The young man thinks about the failure to grant his request and thinks his father does not desire good for him. But the truth is that his father only desires good because he knows very well that his son will not be able to control himself if he gets angry. It is for this reason that Allah Almighty says:

"They have learned what will harm them and bring them no benefit." (2:102)

Allah Almighty Himself has said that magic brings no benefit. So no one can say that he will learn magic in order to use it for good, because Allah's knowledge is far greater than that of man. Allah says that only harm comes from magic and benefit does not come from it. Therefore anyone who claims otherwise is definitely lying and in fact wants to obtain an advantage by which he can cause oppression. Do not then deceive yourself or others by saying that. You are merely exposing yourself to a trial which will lead you to disbelief.

All who practise magic come to a bad end and die poor, humiliated, denounced and hated. When you examine the lives of people who do these deeds, you find that their end is evil in every case. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - warns us in the Noble Qur'an about that. He informs us of the fate of those who seek the help of jinn and use them to obtain superiority over other people or to frighten them. Allah says:

"Certain men among mankind used to seek refuge with c e rtain men among the jinn and they increased them in evil-doing." (72:6)

Seeking the Help of the Jinn Does Not Bring Good

So seeking the help of the jinn never brings people any good. It only exposes them to evil. If we were to study those who practise magic, we would find that despite their seeking the help of jinn, all those around them are in fact better than them. The practitioners of magic seek their livelihood from people who do not practise magic and do not work with jinn. In other words, the magicians constitute the lower hand reaching out for money from other slaves of Allah who do not practise any sort of magic. If those who practise magic were to do what was good for them, they would not find themselves in need in the first place. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - wants to show us that those who practise magic, and those whose help they seek by virtue of their greater strength, show themselves to be inferior to those around them by seeking provision from them.

No one can claim that seeking the help of the jinn contains benefit. Using anything, whether magic or weapons or words, in other than Allah's way, inevitably brings harm with it. In the same way that people are harmed when they leave the Path of Allah for material things, so they are also harmed by leaving it for unseen things.

True belief requires us to devote all we learn to the service of Allah. This occurs when we hold fast to legitimate knowledge. The temptation of this illicit knowledge is something which Allah Almighty has put there as a test for human belief and so we must all try to avoid its allure. Anyone who grazes around a forbidden area is sure to fall into it.

Temptations can take a physical form, like those of women, property and children, but they can also take an unseen form such as magic. We must avoid both kinds but especially magic because it is an enticement from which only evil results and which never brings us any good at all. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - told His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to convey to us that magic is a temptation which leads to disbelief. We believe everything that Allah Almighty sent down to His truthful, faithful Messenger and so we must avoid its temptation and all that leads to it. Therefore it is virtually an obligatory duty to refrain from learning magic.

When we look at those who use magic, we will find that the personality of every one of them is filled with the desire for domination and also that their provision is decreasing. No magician can turn the magic he knows to his own profit. This is

enough of a proof for us that magic is evil and not good, harmful and not beneficial. Allah Almighty says:

"Magicians do not prosper." (10:77)
And the Almighty also says:
"Magicians do not prosper anywhere they go."(20:69)
Neither success nor benefit ever comes from magic.

Separating a Man from His Wife

Thus all that is achieved by magic is harm and injury and the types of harm it can do are very numerous. The workings of magic remain invisible to us, so we must take on trust what Allah Almighty and His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, report to us about it separating a man from his wife.

Separating a man from his wife can be achieved by ordinary everyday methods. Are there not wicked people in normal life who put in a word here and a word there and thereby cause a couple to separate? This happens and many of us have witnessed it. But what happens through these visible means is also enabled to take place through unseen things.

We know that the shaytans of the jinn can take on diff e r e n t shapes and that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was once going to tie a shaytan to the pillar of the mosque after it took on the shape of man and became subject to human laws. We say that since this is the case, there is, for instance, nothing to prevent a shaytan of the jinn assuming an ugly form on the face of a woman so that when her husband sees her face he cannot bear to look at her and vice versa, so that the wife finds her husband repulsive. This can happen. This is one way of separating a man from his wife. There are also other ways which we do not know because they are unseen and hidden from us. However what we do know is that it is easy to separate a man from his wife by means of magic because the Noble Qur'an tells us so. There are many other types of harm which result from magic.

"How" does not Exist in Matters of the Unseen

There are countless unseen matters in the creation of Allah glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - and the question "how?" is inapplicable to them. The unseen belongs to Allah. In respect of physical matters it is possible to ask

"how?", and so, for instance, we can ask how water is formed. The answer consists of an actual experiment in which two atoms of hydrogen are combined with one atom of oxygen and water is formed. However, we cannot ask why this happens because this is something known only to Allah Almighty. As for matters of the unseen, no one can know how they occur. Ibrahim the Friend, peace be upon him, asked his Lord, saying:

"When Ibrahim said, 'My Lord, show me how You bring the dead to life.' He said, 'Do you not then believe?' He said, 'Of course I do! But so that my heart may be at peace.'" (2:260)

The father of the Prophets, Ibrahim the friend, peace be upon him, asked Allah Almighty to show him how He brings the dead to life. Did Allah Almighty tell him how to bring the dead to life? No, Allah carried out an experiment before him to affirm the absolute and unrestricted power of Allah to bring the dead to life. The Almighty says:

"He said, 'Take four birds and incline them toward s you. Then put a part of them on each mountain and call them. They will come rushing to you. Know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.'" (2:260)

This was the experiment which was conducted before Ibrahim, peace be upon him. He took four birds and divided them up and placed a part on each mountain and then called them, and then the birds came to him, walking on their feet so that it would be known that they were the same birds he had divided up. They did not come flying from another place so that the business would be confused for him.

However, did Allah Almighty tell him how that happened? No, because "how?" cannot be applied to the unseen. When someone asks how harm befalls the bewitched, we say that Allah Almighty informs us about certain matters and makes other matters hidden from us. Allah informs us that the bewitched are made to imagine that they see things in front of them which are not actually there. For instance, people saw the ropes and staffs of the magicians of Musa turn into huge, slithering snakes. Such illusion or fantasy provokes fear in the hearts of the witnesses and makes their will subject to that of the magician. The fear which fills them removes any resistance from them. That is why they begin to see what the magician wants them to see, as is proven by the fact that they saw the ropes

and staffs as snakes. They do not see what the magician does not want them to see, as is proven by the fact that they did not see the ropes and staffs remain as they were when they had in reality not changed at all. This whole event is related to us by Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - in the Noble Qur'an.

As for separating a man from his wife, Allah Almighty tells us that this can take place through magic, but He does not make it clear to us by what means it occurs. In the same way Allah Almighty informs us that harm occurs by magic, but does not tell us how it takes place.

Magicians Do Not Know the Unseen

Nevertheless, some people still believe that magicians know the Unseen. This is the work of charlatans who try to make people imagine that they can have the Unseen revealed to them, but this is not true.

In order to understand this matter properly we must know that there is a relative Unseen and an absolute Unseen. The relative Unseen is something that is hidden from us but known to someone else. Suppose that I am robbed, for instance. Who is the robber? The answer is hidden from me and I do not know it. The police do not know it either. But the robber himself knows that he stole. The one with whom the stolen goods are concealed also knows who the thief is. It may well be that the person to whom the stolen goods are sold knows who the thief is as well.

A minister might have decided to promote me to a higher office. This is hidden from me and I do not yet know that I have been promoted. But the minister who issued the decision knows. The director of the department also knows because he took the decision to have it copied. The typist or the one responsible for copying the decision knows because they undertook the operation of copying it. So this is a relatively unseen matter because it is hidden from me but not hidden from others. This kind of Unseen can be known by man and jinn.

The past is also a kind of Unseen - something happened and came to an end and is hidden from people. However, the person who did it and the one who witnessed it know it. That is why it is a relative Unseen. The same applies to things which occurred a long time ago all the witnesses of which are now dead. It is a relative Unseen because we might come upon some documents or evidence

which reveal them to us and tell us their story. The absolute Unseen, however, is something which only Allah Almighty knows. He says:

"The Knower of the Unseen; He does not manifest His Unseen to anyone." (72:26)

Some people might argue that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, told us about things which were unseen, things which had not yet happened and then which later took place. We say that the noble Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed about the Unseen. Allah Almighty told His Messenger whatever He wished him to know of the news of the Unseen. What Allah Almighty told him, the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, told us. The Noble Qur'an indicates that when Allah Almighty says:

"Say: 'I do not say to you that I have at my disposal the store-houses of Allah, nor do I know the Unseen.'" (6:50)

Allah instructed His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to say to all people that he does not know the Unseen but, nevertheless, Allah informed him of certain matters of the Unseen which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, then reported to us.

The Jinn Do not Know the Unseen

We know from the Noble Qur'an that Allah Almighty sent Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, as His Messenger. He protected the community of Muhammad from the shaytans eavesdropping on the Noble Qur'an when it was descending from heaven just as the shaytans were prevented from eavesdropping on the decrees when they were descending.

So the shaytans now have no knowledge of the Unseen to enable them to convey it to the magicians or soothsayers - and even before that the shaytans did not know the whole of the Unseen. The Noble Qur'an indicates that fact to us in the story of the death of Sulayman, peace be upon him:

"Then when We decreed death for him, nothing divulged his death to them but the earth creature eating away at his stick. Then when he fell down it was made clear to the jinn that if they had truly had knowledge of the Unseen they would not have stayed there suffering humiliating punish ment." (34:14)

In this noble *ayat* Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - tells us that when Sulayman, peace be upon him, died, he was leaning on his staff. Allah hid the death of Sulayman from both jinn and men; and the jinn continued to do what Sulayman had told them to do before his death until Allah Almighty gave power to one of the creatures of the earth, a woodworm. The woodworm ate away at Sulayman's staff until the staff was weakened and could no longer support him and he fell to the ground. Then the jinn knew that he had died a long time previously. That happened so that jinn and men might know that the jinn do not know the Unseen.

The jinn used to make people imagine that they knew the Unseen and told them lies about it. A number of people believed them and believed their lies about the Unseen and the things they added to Allah's religion, things which lead to disbelief.

So it is clear to us from the Noble Qur'an that the jinn absolutely do not know the Unseen, and that however great the power of the rebellious shaytans is they will not attain to knowledge of the Unseen. Before the Qur'an came down, they used to eavesdrop in the heavens but even that was not truly speaking knowledge of the Unseen. It was eavesdropping and then remembering some things but not knowing others. When the Qur'an was sent down, they were completely stopped from eavesdropping and nothing remained of magic except what the two angels, Marut and Harut, taught which causes people harm.

So the claims of magicians or impostors or astrologers that they will able to report about the Unseen, or that they know the Unseen, are false and without foundation. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"Astrologers are lying even when they happen to speak the truth."

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, forbade us to believe astrologers and fortune-tellers or to frequent them. 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

"Magicians and fortune-tellers are the soothsayers of the non-Arabs. Anyone who sits with a soothsayer, believing what he says, is far removed from what Allah sent down on Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace."

The shaytans and the jinn might well have knowledge of the relative Unseen by virtue of their subtle nature and the speed of their movement from one place to another. As we said, the relative Unseen is something that we do not know but some other people do know. But the jinn and shaytans cannot know the absolute Unseen. Anything that may be said to suggest otherwise is not true. The impostors and fortune-tellers are those who try to make people imagine they know it in order to steal their money. At its root, this claim is nothing but desire for money. If a man follows these impostors, the shaytans will pass him from one to another of them until he becomes an unbeliever.

The same applies to those impostors who claim to give people powers by means of amulets and charms. This is also seeking the assistance of the shaytans who disbelieve and reject Allah's *deen*. It is said that the amulets and charms necessarily contain expressions of disbelief in order that the shaytans may assist the fortuneteller or magician.

To sum up, it is best for all people not to learn magic because Allah Almighty says, *"They have learned what will harm them and bring them no benefit."* (2:102). All who practise magic or teach it to people or learn it come to a bad end. Their provision is lessened and evil befalls them. Magic does not bring any kind of benefit or success. Rather the reverse is the case. The shaytans, magicians and soothsayers do not know the Unseen. All that is said about their knowledge of the Unseen is a lie and a false claim.

We now turn to a subject which few scholars have dealt with and which is generally avoided. That is the subject of the Jew who bewitched the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. There are many *hadiths* on this matter, and it is clear that what happened is attested to by the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and there is no testimony against it. If we look at the fine details of what happened and things which occurred to the previous Prophets, it becomes an easily understood subject with little scope for debate.

Chapter Five The Messenger and Magic

In discussing the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and magic, it must stated, before we look at any *hadith* on the subject, that all the

Messengers of Allah were human and that all human beings are subject to the laws which govern humanity. That is why when Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - wanted to manifest the incapacity of His creatures in the face of His Strength and Power, He gave them power over one of His Messengers and then made them powerless to touch him.

An example of this is when the people of Ibrahim, peace be upon him, decided to burn him in the fire. This was an attempt on their part to burn one of the Messengers of Allah. It would have been possible for Allah to save Ibrahim by any number of ways. He could have concealed him from the eyes of the unbelievers so that they did not see him. He could have shown him a safe place to conceal himself where they would not find him or where it would it not have occurred to them to look. Or the unbelievers could have brought him to the fire and then Allah could have made the rain pour down and put the fire out and have saved Ibrahim in that way. But Allah Almighty allowed the unbelievers to find Ibrahim, seize him, and throw him into the fire, and He also let the fire burn and did not send down any rain to extinguish it. Then the miracle was accomplished. Allah Almighty says:

" We said, 'O Fire, be coolness and peace for Ibrahim!'" (21:69)

This happened so that the people - all people - would know that Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been placed by the unbelievers in the fire and that the fire did not burn him. Ibrahim was a mortal, subject to the laws of humanity. When he was thrown in the fire, it should have burned him. If, for instance, Ibrahim had been an angel, it would have been possible for the fire not to burn him. The guardians of *Jahannam* are angels. Allah Almighty says:

"...continually scorching the flesh. Over it there are nineteen. We have designated none but angels to be mas ters of the Fire." (74:29-31)

We know from this that angels are not burned by fire. That is why if Ibrahim had been an angel, it would not have been a miracle for him to be thrown into the fire and not be burned.

Musa, peace be upon him, was the Prophet of Allah and him to whom Allah spoke directly. Allah wanted him to face the test of the magicians. So He prepared him for what would happen. Allah taught him about miracles and

magic. The miracle was that his staff turned into a real snake, its nature truly changing from wood to snake. That is why Allah Almighty asked him to throw down his staff:

"He said, 'Throw it down, Musa.' He threw it down and there it was, a slithering snake." (20:19-20)

This was training for the miracle to show him that his staff would be transformed into a real snake when Musa cast it down in front of the magicians. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - wanted Musa not to be startled by that and not to be alarmed or afraid. He was instructing him about what was going to happen. Then Allah also instructed him about the magic which the magicians would confront him with:

"'Throw down your staff!' Then when he saw it slither ing like a snake, he turned his back and did not turn round again." (28:31)
The important thing to look at here is the expression of Allah

Almighty, *"like a snake".* This time the staff did not in fact turn into a snake, but Musa, peace be upon him, saw it as if it was a snake. This was instruction about the magic of the magicians who would make Musa see their ropes appear as snakes.

Musa and Magic

In this way Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! instructed Musa in a practical way before he met the magicians about what would happen to him: both about the miracle of the transformation of the staff into a real snake and also about the magic which would be shown to him when he met Pharaoh's magicians. But what happened when Musa confronted Pharaoh's magicians? The Almighty says:

"He said, 'No, you throw!' And suddenly their ro p e s and staffs appeared to him, by their magic, to be slithering about." (20:66)

Here we must note the words of Allah Almighty, *"appeared to h i m , "* referring to Musa, peace be upon him. It appeared to him that the staffs and ropes which Pharaoh's magicians threw had been transformed into snakes. In other words the magicians had bewitched Musa's eyes so that he saw the ropes and staffs, which

they had thrown in the form of snakes. He did not see them as the ropes and staffs that they actually were. This is corroborated by the words of Allah Almighty:

"Musa felt in himself a feeling of alarm." (20:68)

In other words Musa himself felt afraid. This is an indication that his eyes had been bewitched. If he had seen the ropes and staffs of Pharaoh's magicians as the ropes and staffs that they really were, he would not have felt alarmed. Why should he feel fear when he saw staffs and ropes cast down in front of him and they remained as they were without their nature changing? He must, therefore, have seen them in the form in which the magicians of Pharaoh wanted them to appear to him. No transformation did in fact take place but Musa imagined that the ropes and staffs had been changed into snakes. The sorcerers of Pharaoh had bewitched his eyes. Because he was the Messenger of Allah, Allah Almighty sustained him:

"We said, 'Have no fear. You will have the upper hand. Throw down what is in your right hand. It will swallow up what they have done. They have only done a magician's trick. Magicians do not prosper wherever they go.'"

(20:68-69)

Thus although the eyes of Musa were bewitched, Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - braced him with revelation and told him not to fear, but to cast his staff so that the miracle would take place. That still happened despite the fact that Allah had instructed Musa about what would happen with the magicians, both in respect of the miracle of the transformation of the staff into a snake and the illusion which would occur. This is not in any sense a shortcoming. Musa was a mortal Messenger, and he was subject to the laws of his humanness - but he was also supported and sustained by Allah Almighty.

The Hadith of Magic

Now we come to the Messenger of Allah Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Al-Bukhari relates in his *S a h i h* collection (10:192) and Muslim in his *S a h i h* c o l l e c t i o n (4:1719) from 'A'isha, may Allah be pleased with her, who said:

"The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was bewitched by one of the Jews of Banu Zurayq called Labid ibn al-A'sam. So the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, began to imagine that he had done something when he had not. One day - or night - the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, made supplication for a long period and then said, 'O 'A'isha, are you aware that Allah has informed me about the matter I asked him about? Two men came to me. One of them sat at my head and the other at my feet. The one who was at my head asked the one who was at my feet (or vice versa), "What is wrong with the man?" The other man said, "He is under the effect of magic." He asked, "Who has bewitched him?" He said, "Labid ibn al-A'sam." He said, "What was it done with?" He replied, "With a comb and the hair stuck to it and the skin of the pollen of a male date-palm." He said, "Where is it?" He said, "In the well of Dhi Arwan."'

"The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, went to that well with some of his Companions. Then he said, 'O 'A'isha, by Allah, its water was red like an infusion of henna and its date-palms were like the heads of shaytans.' 'Messenger of Allah, did you burn it?' He replied, 'No. Allah has cured me and I disliked to let evil spread among the people, so I ordered that the well be filled in.'"

So ends the *hadith* which is related in al-Bukhari and Muslim about what happened to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This *hadith* has provoked much debate among scholars.

What is important is the documentation of the *h a d i t h*. As for the fact that magic was worked on the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, there is nothing particularly significant in that. It is in fact a response to the Challenge issued by Allah in His Book. Allah Almighty challenges men and jinn in the Noble Qur'an when He says:

"Say: 'If both men and jinn had banded together in order to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could never have produced its like, even if they backed each other up.'" (17:88)

And the Almighty also says:

"Or do they say, 'He has fabricated it'? Say: 'Then pro duce a sura like it and call on anyone you can apart from Allah if you are being truthful.'" (10:38)

The Challenge to Men and Jinn

The challenge in the Noble Qur'an is thus addressed to both men and jinn. What did men do? What did the jinn do? Men resisted the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, harmed him and opposed him and tortured the believers and proclaimed enmity to the *deen* and tried to stop people from believing. They plotted to murder the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, but Allah made their actions in all of this come to nothing. Thus men failed both in their open enmity and injury and also in their secret conspiring and plotting.

The only option that remained for them was to use another, greater, power. It had to be greater and stronger than any human power because all the powers of man had failed in their attempt to frustrate the call to the *deen* of Allah and to plot against His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This power was that of the jinn. Allah Almighty wanted to confront them with a similar failure in respect of the power of the jinn so that all people might know that neither the strength of man nor that of the jinn would ever succeed in overcoming the Messenger of Allah.

Therefore they sought the assistance of magic. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - indicated to the Messenger of Allah that they had bewitched him, and guided him to the place where the spell was hidden and informed him how the magic was carried out. He did so in order that the whole world might know that no creature had any power over Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, whether they openly declared their enmity or concealed that enmity and plotted to kill him, or sought the help of another species, the jinn. Allah Almighty, who sent him, revealed to him what had happened and nullified the devices of all those who plotted, whether man or jinn.

Not an Indictment but a Challenge

Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was bewitched by the Jews. This is not any kind of indictment of him but rather a challenge to men and jinn to do their worst against the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him

and grant him peace. Allah Almighty included the jinn in the challenge in relation to the Qur'an and the Path of Islam.

It must be realised from these noble *ayats* which challenge men and jinn that the real challenge is accomplished in respect of the faculties of the jinn. They tried to harm the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and failed. This was known. It was not for men alone but for jinn and men because the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was sent to both jinn and men. So everyone must be shown that the devices of both men and jinn together will not harm him at all.

If this magic had been a hidden event and had not been made public with people being aware of it, they could have said that the Q u r'an had challenged men and jinn and that whereas men had taken up the challenge and failed, the jinn had not taken it up. Perhaps if they had taken up the challenge, they would have been successful. So Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! wanted to establish for all to see that if the jinn took up the challenge they too would fail.

The Miracle of the Hijra

We must note the fact that men and jinn plotted against the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, on several occasions, and that the plot to kill the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, on the eve of the *hijra* was a plot hatched by various groups of the shaytans, both among men and jinn, who all participated in it. Allah Almighty wanted to challenge all who plotted in secret against the Messen-ger of Allah.

It had to be that the Divine Power preserving the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, would be apparent. Allah Almighty did not wish to conceal His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in a safe place where the unbelievers could not reach him. So He had him remain in his house and the unbelievers knew that he was in his house. Nor did Allah Almighty wish His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to leave the house before the arrival of the strong men who had been chosen to carry out the plot to assassinate him. Those men arrived and surrounded the house of the Messenger of Allah while he was in it. So all the components of the plot were in place.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was asleep in his house and the men who had come to kill him were surrounding the house. Then what happened? The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, came out of his house and Allah took away sight from the eyes of the men who had come to kill the Messenger of Allah and made them fall asleep. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, took a handful of dust and threw it in their faces and said, "The faces are disfigured." But none of them moved and none of them was aware that the Messenger of Allah had gone between them on his way to the cave.

Such was the Divine miracle which constituted the real challenge to the unbelievers. If the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had been concealed in a place they did not know, they could have said, "If we had found him, we would have killed him." If he had left his house before the unbelievers who were ready to kill him had arrived, they could have said, "If we had reached him while he was in his house, we would have killed him." They knew where he was and he was asleep in is bed but they were still unable to kill him and he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, left safe and sound.

Magic is Powerless

The same is also true of magic. If they had not sought the help of magic and the jinn, they would have said, "If we had sought the help of magic, we would have defeated him." If Allah Almighty had nullified magic before that occurred, they could have said, "If magic had not been nullified, it would have been a different story."

But Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - willed that they should seek the help of sorcery and the jinn and that the eyes of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, should be bewitched, just as the eyes of Musa were bewitched before him. Then Allah Almighty guided him to the place where the magic was to bring it to naught and showed him the one who carried out the magic so that all the Muslims would see it and know what had transpired.

So it can be seen that this question, far from being to the detriment of the Messenger of Allah, in fact serves to confirm him. It confirms for us that the jinn

took up the challenge against the noble Messenger and that Allah Almighty helped him against them.

However, the magic to which our noble Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was exposed, was in itself the same kind of magic as that to which Musa was exposed. It is the magic of creating an appearance which only affects the eye and does not affect the intellect or the heart or the rest of the limbs of the body: in other words, it was an illusion.

Hopefully this will have served to bring about correct understanding of the story of the sorcery used against the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

After that we come to what Allah Almighty says about the harm of magic: *"They do not harm anyone by it, except with the permis sion of Allah."* (2:102)

We can see by this that Allah Almighty has been merciful to His slaves, and that even if He gives some of His creation the power to seek the help of the shaytans in their attempt to cause people harm, He has reserved for Himself the permission to actually cause harm. He asks us to seek refuge with Him from magic. We have formulated a supplication incorporating the text of the *ayat* which mentions it as protection against magic and envy.

A Supplication for Protection against Magic and Envy

"O Allah, You have given some of Your creatures the power to use magic and do evil, but You have reserved for Yourself the permission to harm. I seek refuge with Yo u from the harm whose infliction You have reserved for Yourself, by Your words, *'They do not harm anyone by it, except with the permission of Allah.'"*

If people ask how it is possible for magic to be ineffective, we reply that examples of this happen all the time in normal life. Let us suppose that a man wants to kill me. Allah may have enabled him to purchase the gun to kill me with and to learn how to shoot. He may even have put me together with him in a deserted place where there are no witnesses. However even with all these means at his disposal, does that give him the power to kill me? No, it does not. His hand might shake at the moment he shoots and the bullet miss me. I might move to the right or left by Allah's inspiring me, and the bullet miss. He might turn suddenly or suddenly

jump, or a dog suddenly bark and frighten him. Any of these or a thousand other things might happen to prevent my death taking place.

There are many examples of this kind of thing happening. Do we not hear about murderers who go to kill someone and then err in the darkness and kill someone else by mistake? Or they try to strike a certain person and another person comes in between because of the quarrel between them, and the blow does not reach the one for whom it was intended at all.

From this we should understand quite clearly that the mere fact that the means for something to happen is in place does not necessarily mean that the thing will happen because above all causes is the will of the Causer. It is that and that alone which makes the thing occur or not occur, however comprehensive the means.

A ship might sink and the means be there for every passenger to drown, but Allah may will that one or two persons find a barrel which takes them to the shore. A house might collapse and kill everyone in it, but a beam of wood protects the life of a man sleeping under it. A house might collapse on a group of inhabitants and some rescue men arrive and bring out some of them alive and some of them dead although they all lived in the same house and they were exposed to the same circumstances.

Thousands of other examples attest to the fact that Allah is the Doer when the means are apparent, just as He is the Doer when the means are unseen.

Action Belongs to Allah Alone

A man might be in the furthest possible place from danger. Then a stray bullet comes from no one knows where and kills him. He might enter a place, such as a cave or basement, to protect himself from a possible danger such as someone attacking him and injuring him. In that place he finds a snake or a wild animal which kills him. Or perhaps the owner of the basement where he has taken refuge thinks he is a thief and therefore shoots him. So he sought refuge from a possible danger but came face to face with a real one.

A believer must always remember that his power is limited and that it is only the power of Allah which has no limits. He should not be subject to the illusion that

any man or shaytan has the power to inflict harm on him or injure him apart from the power of Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted!

Allah Almighty calls our attention to the fact that magic or lack of magic will not harm anyone except with the permission of Allah, saying:

"They have learned what will harm them and bring them no benefit. They know that anyone who deals in it will have no share in the Next World. How evil the thing that they have sold themselves for, if they did but know!"

(2:102)

We have discussed the fact that magic harms both the magician and the bewitched. We made it clear how the magician is afflicted by disasters and dies humiliated, filled with bitterness, sorrow, alienation, poverty, and complete disappointment. The two angels who taught people magic told any who desired to learn from them, "We are a trial, so do not disbelieve."

But unjust, ignorant man insisted on learning magic, thinking that he was getting something from which much wealth could be gained. He did not know that he had sold himself for an evil price and that he had taken on harm and lost this world and the Next. Magic does not increase man's opportunities. Rather it leads to disbelief and leads to the loss of this world and the Next. That is why Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - calls our attention to the fact that those who practise magic have purchased the vilest thing in this world and sold themselves in order to receive rejection, poverty and the punishment of the Next World.

We have discussed the example of sorcery to which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was exposed and made it clear that Musa, peace be upon him, was also bewitched when he confronted Pharaoh's magicians and that Allah Almighty supported him; and that the question of our M e s s e n g e r, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, being exposed to magic was part of the fullness of the challenge of this *deen* in respect of the jinn. Allah showed His Messenger who had carried out the magic and the place where it was, and that this confirms the Messenger rather than disparaging him in any way.

We have made it clear that Allah Almighty has reserved the permission to harm by magic for Himself alone and therefore that no harm occurs from the magician to the bewitched except by the permission of Allah.

It remains for us to discuss one other unseen force which is hidden from us but about which Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - has cautioned us: and that is envy.

Chapter Six Envy

We have discussed magic, and before we finish the discussion we must also speak about envy. That is because envy, like magic, is one of the hidden forces in existence. If it had not been that Allah Almighty has mentioned envy to us in the Noble Qur'an, we would know nothing about it. It is hidden from us in all its forms.

Envy is wishing for a blessing to be removed from someone without the envier benefiting from it. You might hope that a blessing will leave someone so that you can have it or act to remove a blessing from a man so that you can have it for yourself. But that is not truly speaking envy. Envy is to wish a blessing to leave someone without the envier gaining any benefit at all.

Envy is a fact and a reality whose existence is confirmed by the fact that it is mentioned in the Noble Qur'an. It is one of the evil forces of the Unseen which can harm man. That is why Allah Almighty asks us to seek refuge with Him from it, saying:

"And from the evil of the envier when he envies." (113:5)

We cannot see envy but the fact that something is so small that it cannot be seen by the eye does not mean its effect is any the less. In fact its effect may be all the greater. The smallest germs, for instance, are the ones which have the most severe effect on the body. They are the strongest in resisting treatment. As science progresses and we are able to enlarge things hundreds of thousands of times or millions of times, we discover germs and very small things whose effect is very severe. So the fact that we cannot see envy does not necessarily mean that it has no effect or that its effect is weak.

To make this easier to grasp, we say that as science advances, many types of rays have been discovered. They include laser beams which were discovered recently. These laser beams have many practical uses. They are among the most precise means of measurement. They are used in delicate surgical operations. Operations can take place using laser beams without the need of any scalpel and without shedding a single drop of blood. These beams penetrate the finest and hardest things. Modern medicine has now begun to rely on laser beams in many areas. Yet can the sick person see what he is being treated with or does the one who carries out the operation see the laser beams? No, but their effect on the body is greater than that of a scalpel.

So why should you suppose that the eye of the envier does not emit rays more deadly than laser beams? They enter your body and do things in it while you are not aware of it. The concept of laser beams makes it easier for us to grasp what is said about the eye of the envier. They give us a picture of a sensory event. It approximates for us a form of the unseen which is neither sensed nor perceived.

Do you not find that when a man is angry, we say that his eyes are blazing or giving off sparks, or that he is looking daggers and other similar expressions? Where did these metaphors come from? Are there real sparks or any actual daggers we can see in his eye? Is there not a sensation which we are aware of, even if we do not see anything physical in front of us which leads to it? No one has actual sparks coming out of his eye nor do any real daggers issue from his eye. But this feeling we express indicates that we fully sense the effect of something non-physical - just as a sick person senses the effect of the laser rays, but does not see them.

Envy is Real

It is established from the Noble Qur'an that envy is real and that it inflicts evil on man. We do not see anything physical. As we said, the smaller a thing is, the greater its severity sometimes is. The severity is not connected to the size. It is connected to the depth of the effectiveness and its power. Envy and magic are both among the evils which cannot seen, but which are on a par with visible evils. The harmful rays only come from the envier in states of malice and envy.

Allah Almighty says:
"And from the evil of the envier when he envies." (113:5)

From this we know that man can be injured by envy and that envy is an evil from which we must seek refuge with Allah. Everybody has spiteful, grudging impulses and, when they are provoked, envy occurs. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - as a mercy to us, commanded us to seek refuge from hidden evils like malice and envy.

When our belief in Allah is strong, we turn to Him and seek refuge with Him and He protects us from the evil of all of this. But those who perpetuate these things do not seek refuge with Allah. When harm befalls such a person, he tries to seek refuge in mortal powers. When a man is afflicted by the harm of magic, he goes from one magician to another magician to another magician, attempting to nullify the effect of magic. If he had turned to Allah with a sincere heart, the action of the magic would have been nullified immediately.

It is the same with envy. People try to seek refuge in talismans or amulets or other things, like seeking the help of green pearls. These talismans neither harm or help nor do they remove envy or nullify magic. This is a type of *s h i r k* against which we caution people because all power to act in existence belongs to Allah Almighty alone. No one exists who does all that he wills, except Allah Almighty. When we seek refuge with other than Allah, we seek protection or the removal of harm or whatever through that thing and that is a type of *shirk*.

Allah Almighty commands us in His Mighty Book to seek refuge with Him alone from all these things. He says:

"Say: 'I seek refuge with the Lord of Daybreak, from the evil of what He has created, from the evil of the darkness when it gathers, from the evil of the women who blow on knots, from the evil of an envier when he envies." (113:1-5)

And the Almighty also says:

"Say: 'I seek refuge with the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men, from the evil of the slinking whisper er who whispers in the breasts of men, of jinn and men." (114:1-6)

Allah Almighty commanded His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, by using the word, "*Say*". When we read this *ayat*, we say what the Messenger of Allah said.

We must note that in *Surat al-Falaq* we are turning to Allah and seeking His help in matters in which our will plays no part and in respect of which we cannot repel harm from ourselves. In *Surat a n - N a s* we turn to Allah Almighty and seek refuge with Him in matters in which our will does play a role, but confronting of which we fear we will be weak.

Seeking Refuge with Allah

Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - says, *"Say: 'I seek refuge with the Lord of Daybre a k . "* "Daybreak" signifies morning or the light which comes to obliterate the darkness. So it is as if we were seeking refuge with the Light of Allah Almighty to drive away the darkness of evil and falsehood from ourselves and to illuminate the Path of Truth.

Seeking refuge here is turning to Allah Almighty from everything which alarms man and threatens his security and safety and which man cannot confront with his own power. That is why he seeks refuge with the One who has the power to repel evil.

So Allah Almighty tells us to seek refuge with Him. When we do that, we are following the Path of Allah. The Path is light and guidance for man in his life. "Daybreak" is that light which drives away the darkness. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - is the Light of the heavens and the earth. He is the one who brings light into our hearts to guide us to belief and certainty. He is the One who brings light into all His existence to guide us on our way.

Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - says, *"from the evil of what He created."* Here we must pause. Allah did not create evil in relation to man, but rather He created that which benefits our life, and man himself chooses that which brings evil into existence and brings disobedience into existence and brings into being what corrupts existence. Allah gives us an example of the meaning of evil in the Noble Qur'an in His words:

"And from the fruit of the date-palm and the grape-vine you take both an intoxicant and wholesome provision. In that there is certainly a sign for people who use their understanding." (16:67)

The noble *ayat* shows us that Allah Almighty created dates and grapes so that we can eat them, but we have transformed them from being wholesome provision into evil since from them we have made wine. When we look around us we find that evil springs from man's bad usage of things, and not from the things in themselves. For instance, we have many benefits and uses in knives, but we can change this to evil by killing people with them.

Our tongues enable us to testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and to read the Qur'an, but we can change this to evil by using our tongues to speak words of disbelief. We seek refuge with Allah! And we can use them to bar people from the path of Allah and to give false testimony and other things. The hands have innumerable beneficial uses, but we can turn them to evil by using it for murder, injury and committing unlawful actions.

Thus evil comes from people's evil utilisation of that which Allah Almighty created for their benefit. So we know the meaning of the noble verse, *"from the evil what He created."* He continues by saying, *"from the evil of darkness when it gathers,"* Part of the evil of the darkness of the night is *"when it gathers."* This means when its darkness begins. On account of its darkness, night renders us powerless to defend ourselves because we cannot see in the dark what is plotted against us. An enemy may conceal himself in the darkness and kill us. We might step on a snake or a harmful insect which we do not see in the dark and so it injures us. Night is stillness, rest and sleep. When a man sleeps, he is powerless to defend himself. That is why he needs someone to protect him and guard him. This is why guards are increased at night. The police are told to stay awake to keep the peace. In the day a man can protect himself. But at night, he needs someone to stay awake to protect him.

"The Women who Blow on Knots"

His words, *"women who blow on knots,"* means from the evil of the devices of magicians. *"Women who blow on knots"* means magicians in general. It is said that some of the magicians used to make knots and then blow on them and the magic would thereby afflict people.

His words, *"from the envier when he envies,"* refer to the evil of that hidden force which inflicts harm on man and which fills hearts with malice. The envier with malice can do anything ruinous thing, like burning the house of the one for

whom he feels malice and envy, or injuring him or his property or his children. There is nothing like malice and envy to destroy and harm.

Envy is incompatible with belief because it entails lack of contentment with the decree of Allah and lack of contentment with what Allah has allotted you and lack of contentment with the decrees of Allah in general. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - has distributed blessings to people with justice, but unfortunately we only notice the blessing of wealth and we overlook everything else, even though there are blessings many times more important than the blessing of wealth.

The blessing of health, for instance, is one of the greatest of Allah's blessings to His slaves. There is no use in all the wealth in the world if you are ill and powerless on your bed, unable to move. Around you are all blessings, but you cannot enjoy them. What is the use of wealth if Allah deprives you of the blessing of sight and you cannot see any of this splendid existence nor take a single step without someone helping you? When people leave you by yourself, you bump into things which injure you.

What is the use of wealth if you are not given the blessing of hearing and you become unable to understand what is around you, powerless to speak and to learn and advance in life? What is the use of wealth if you lose the benefit of understanding and you become mad or afflicted with mental illness? Your life becomes a hell however much wealth you possess. What is the use of wealth when you are afflicted by the disasters of life and all your children die and everyone hates you so that you cannot live in safety?

Do you not see rulers and kings whose people overthrow them going off seeking asylum to save themselves from being killed? Most of the world's nations refuse to grant them the right of asylum and the earth becomes constricted for them after having been vast and they live abject in exile or in constant fear. They cannot sleep at night for fear that one of their enemies will overpower them. Wealth can be also be a curse leading to corruption, drug addiction, and other depravities.

Envy for Blessings

We should not envy people their wealth, for Allah can bless us in such a way that a little wealth becomes enough for us. He may bless us in our children so that they are a delight to us while the children of the rich may be a punishment and source of exasperation for them. Allah may give us a peaceful calm life while He gives the wealthy a life of constant irritation.

In any case, envy is lack of contentment with the decree and power of Allah. We are asked to be content with Allah's decree and to praise Allah for all that He brings about for us. Allah - glory be to Him and may He be exalted! - calls our attention to the fact that we should not be sorry for anything that passes us by because that thing might contain an evil which Allah has kept far from us. We should not exult in what comes to us because the thing which which comes to us and which we exult in may be bad for us. That is in conformity with the words of Allah Almighty:

"Nothing happens, either in the earth or in yourselves, but that it is in a Book before We bring it into being. That is an easy matter for Allah. [He says this] that you may not be grieved about the things that pass you by nor exult in the things that come to you. Allah does not love any vain or boastful man." (57:22-23)

When man is content with the decree of Allah, Allah blesses him both in His *deen* and in his worldly affairs.

This brings us to the end of this book. We know that although magic and envy are among the hidden forces of existence they are forces whose existence is very real and about which Allah Almighty has told us. In His Noble Qur'an, Allah has told us all we need to know about the evil of these two forces. He asks us to seek refuge with Him from both of them. Whoever recites the two *Suras* of refuge, which are *Surat al-Falaq* and *Surat an-Nas*, every night, Allah will protect him and guard him.

Similarly, the *Ayat al-Kursi* (2:255) is protection for all who recite it against every evil. We should know that we must turn to Allah Almighty because He alone has the power to protect us and guard us. We pray to Allah Almighty to protect us from evil in this world and the Next World and to give us success and bless us in our *deen* and in this world. He hears and answers our prayers.

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